BIOG

A Great Physician and Medical Humanist

A Review of Harvey Cushing's Life of Sir William Osler

By

William H. Welch

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The Saturday Review of Literature
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WHILE Carlyle's conservative statement that "a well written life is almost as rare as a well spent one" does not imply any necessary connection between the two, it is delightful to find that Dr. Harvey Cushing has linked to the well spent life of Sir William Osler a well written story* of that life, so rich in accomplishment, so strong in influence, so fine in character, so varied in interest. With full knowledge of the facts and events of Osler's life, admitted to close intimacy, himself not merely a spectator but often a participant in these events, possessed of the requisite literary skill, and impregnated with the Oslerian aether as truly as Boswell with the Johnsonian, Dr. Cushing has produced a biography fully satisfying the hungry anticipations of the host of friends, disciples and admirers of Osler, and of much interest to the general reader.

In avoiding the obtrusion, often so exasperating, of the personality of the biographer into the story, Dr. Cushing has carried self-effacement to an extreme which under similar circumstances is perhaps

*The Life of Sir William Osler by Harvey Cushing. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1925. 2 vols. $12.50. This review appeared in abridged form in The Saturday Review of Literature, November 21, 1925, and is here printed in full with the permission of the Editors.

unparalleled. With much ingenuity he has carefully obliterated all direct personal reference to himself, his name with one trifling exception not appearing in the book after the title page, although many of the published letters are to him and the initiated may readily penetrate such disguises as 'one of the latchkeyers,' 'a quondam Baltimore neighbor,' 'his young friend,' 'an overseas American,' etc.

The subject of this biography, born in Canada in 1849 and dying in Oxford in 1919, was a physician, endowed with singularly attractive qualities of mind, heart and character, who attained the highest eminence as a clinician and a teacher in four important universities—McGill, Pennsylvania, Johns Hopkins and Oxford. Not only the participation in the great forward movement of modern medicine, but also the events, the personal contacts and tenacious friendships, the engaging character, the humanism, the historical and bibliographical studies, the extraordinary power by example and precept to inspire devotion and to influence ideals and conduct, especially of young men, all combine to impart to the story of Osler's life a variety of interest scarcely matched in other medical biographies. This interest is in large part intimate and personal and differs from that found in the lives of the great creative minds in medicine and science, as of Pasteur, Darwin, Huxley, Lister, Helmholtz, Virchow, Koch, whose 'official' biographies fill much smaller space than the 1430 pages of Cushing's 'Life of Osler.'

The biographical plan followed is that of a chronological, detailed narrative for each of the

seventy years of Osler's life after infancy and early childhood. The author remarks in one place: "Any one who would keep on Osler's trail . . . . . must needs have good staying qualities." Not only has he demonstrated such qualities, but he has evidently counted upon their possession by his readers, and indeed there are many so interested in everything, even insignificant details, relating to Osler, that for these sympathetic, grateful readers, whom he has evidently had especially in view, his expectation will not be disappointed. Doubtless the general reader without this special interest would welcome an abridgment or perhaps better, a pre-Boswellian type of biography, setting forth a condensed and vigorous statement of the essentials of Osler's life and character. Something of this purpose the author evidently has in mind in characterizing in the brief preface his biographical work as '*mémoires pour servir*,' and his records are excellently adapted for such use. In any wider sense, however, this is an overmodest characterization of an admirable biographical work, which has the stamp of authority, authenticity and permanence.

The author has spared no pains to gather the fullest information on every incident and phase of Osler's life and to arrive at historical truth, the most important and the most difficult thing to secure. With this painstaking thoroughness, accuracy and research of the scholar, he combines no small measure of literary skill in the use of a simple, direct and lively narrative style, in appreciation of what is of human interest, in power of faithful portraiture, and in sense of form whereby

his ample material is welded without creaking joints. If he has not escaped undue length—the besetting sin of most biographers—he has avoided the worse sins of dullness and of unmeasured panegyric. Even for fullness of incident and apparently unessential detail, appeal may be made to no less an authority than Dr. Johnson, who says: "The incidents which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind such as soon escape memory, and are rarely transmitted by tradition," while his own biographer, the most entertaining and greatest of all, adds: "Minute particulars are frequently characteristic and always amusing when they relate to a distinguished man."

Goethe's saying that everyone is a citizen of his age as well as of his country was particularly applicable to Osler, who was not only a great international figure but also possessed of the international mind in a measure which even the tragedy of the World War, bringing the overwhelming sorrow of his life in the death of his only son, could not shatter. It is, therefore, no digression when the author without ever losing sight of his central theme and without confusing biography with history, places his subject in the proper setting by succinct and skillful presentation of surrounding and contemporary conditions, both local and general. He thus succeeds in bringing Osler "into proper alignment with that most remarkable period in the annals of medicine through which he lived and of which he was a part."

Dr. Cushing does not attempt a critical appraisal of Osler's professional contributions and accom-

plishments. His theme is Osler, the man, even more than Osler, the clinician, the teacher, the man of science. The interest and appeal of the work are naturally strongest to physicians and students of medicine, but they reach as well to the general public.

Of the ample material so diligently collected for this biography letters are an important part. Those of Osler, however, many as they are, serve less to enable his biographer and the reader to follow the course of the narrative, than they do to reveal character, for their great purpose was to keep his multitudinous friendships in constant repair. Never was there a man so rich in friendships who kept them brighter or better burnished by means of correspondence, often scrappy, hurried and syncopated to the last degree of abbreviation, but nearly always with some happy personal or whimsical turn. For lively and interesting description the best letters in the book are those of Lady Osler, who possesses much of the lost art of letter-writing. A good example is the letter to her sister describing the Oxford Encaenia of June, 1919, in Vol. II, p. 655.

Particularly interesting are extracts from Cushing's own diary and from letters or statements received by him (although the name of the diarist and the recipient never appears) from correspondents who could illumine some incident or phase of Osler's life. Among many of these contributors may be mentioned Gildersleeve (on the 'Fixed Period' valedictory address), Chief Justice Taft (on the life at Murray Bay), Lord Haldane,

Sir Clifford Allbutt, Lady Astor, Sir Walter Fletcher, Herbert Fisher, Gilbert Murray, Falconer Madan, A. W. Pollard, Sir Frederick Kenyon, Frederick T. Gates, Fielding Garrison, President Hadley, Pierre Marie.

Still more valuable is the rescue by publication of extracts from Osler's unpublished addresses, papers, notebooks, commonplace books and other fragmentary writings, which, as well as the published addresses, contain autobiographical material of which skillful use is made. While adding much to the bulk of the volumes most readers will welcome the judiciously selected extracts from many of Osler's admirable published addresses, which reveal his literary gifts and humane and charming personality and greatly extended his reputation.

A vast biographical material was at the disposal of Dr. Cushing, and it is within the knowledge of the reviewer that in order to bring the work even within its present compass there has been far more than might appear of selection, condensation and elimination. Biographies constructed on the plan of the present one, while as in this instance capable of serving a highly useful purpose and of possessing literary merit and great interest, can hardly attain the highest rank as literary art. Boswell's 'Johnson' is probably the only completely successful and supreme example and here the result is achieved quite as much by the unique adaptation of the subject to the crafty purposes of his biographer as by literary craftsmanship—a combination not likely to be repeated. Even if it were pos-

sible, no one would wish to see exhibited a Boswellized Osler.

Of the three parts into which the work is divided, corresponding to the Canadian, the United States—subdivided into the Philadelphia and the Baltimore sections—and the Oxford periods, full justice is done to each. The devotion of the entire second volume to the Oxford period is justified by the expanded social and human interests, the widened horizon, the more conspicuous stage, the larger influence due to 'the magic halo of accepted fame,' and the war work, rather than by the importance of added professional or scientific contributions. In these later years Osler's literary interests became more and more centered in the fields of medical history, biography and bibliography, which had early attracted him.

The story of Osler's ancestry and early life is fascinatingly told. The student of heredity will find in the sturdy Anglo-Saxon-Celtic stock of the Anglican missionary father and the intellectually alert and vigorous mother, who survived her hundredth birthday, and in the family record ample evidence in support of Galton's opinion approved by Charles Darwin, "That education and environment produce only a small effect on the mind of any one and that most of our qualities are innate." '*L'âme bien née*' was Osler's natural endowment. On the death of an older brother in 1901, a Canadian paper referred to the family as one which "had produced more distinguished men than any other contemporary family in the Commonwealth."

There are certain interesting parallels between the education of Osler and that of Darwin. Both were originally intended for the Church and entered college with the expectation of becoming clergymen; each came under the influence of a clerical naturalist of no special originality, but of scientific enthusiasm combined with religious zeal; Osler walked with Father Johnson as Darwin 'walked with Henslow,' a phrase thereby made memorable as descriptive of the best type of education; diatoms and polyzoa played for Osler the rôle which beetles did for Darwin in stimulating interest in natural history. Darwin, however, never attained the almost sublime height of Osler's Hippocratic reverence for his teachers. In his life there was no haunting personality as of James Bovell, M.D., in Osler's life. Osler's type of mind thus early made manifest on the scientific side was distinctively that of the descriptive naturalist, and so it remained to the end, even in his study of disease —interrogating nature by keen, accurate observation rather than by experiment, asking 'what' rather than 'why' or 'how,' delighted and contented with the study of form and obvious function without great concern for explanations, theories and speculations, addicted to the collection of specimens.

The association, which is not uncommon, of humane and literary interests with this attractive type of mind was also made evident at this early, formative period of Osler's life. The reader running over the fifty-eight references to Sir Thomas Browne in the biography cannot fail to be impressed with the extraordinary influence of the

'*Religio Medici*'—'*comes viae vitaeque*,' the copy purchased in 1868, placed upon his coffin, "the most precious book in my library"—upon the life of Osler, and with his zealous, life-long interest in this great writer, who was also a physician.

Other abiding qualities which were a part of Osler's delightful and lovable personality—his love of sport and of fun, his rare genius for friendship, his generosity and kindness of heart—were all manifest in the school boy and college student; the everlasting 'boy' in Osler survived nearly to the end.

The two years of study following graduation in medicine at McGill University in 1872, spent in England, Germany and Vienna, were of the utmost importance for Osler's subsequent career. The scientific training, the broadened outlook, the acquaintanceships formed and later continued with important teachers and investigators were of decisive influence for him as they were for other American students of medicine of the same period.

The ten years of Osler's professorship of the institutes of medicine in Montreal were devoted mainly to the ardent and successful pursuit of pathological anatomy, both human and comparative; thus he laid the solid scientific foundation for his future clinical work. Indeed the cultivation of pathology in their early professional years was, from the beginning of the nineteenth century on, characteristic of physicians who rose to high eminence. During the five subsequent years in Philadelphia the same pathological interests and work were continued with increased clinical activities in

the hospital wards. Although skilled in the study of animal parasites, his professional equipment did not include the modern bacteriological technique nor the experimental and chemical lines of attack upon the problems of disease, so successfully employed in recent years, although he was entirely sympathetic with these later developments of scientific medicine.

The 240 pages of the biography devoted to the Montreal and Philadelphia periods are full of interest, telling with much detail of Osler's teaching, studies, friendships with students and colleagues, addresses, writings, association with medical journals, societies and libraries, and a thousand other incidents of an active and useful life. Transplantation to other fields never uprooted the friendships and local attachments there formed.

Osler's great opportunity came with his call to the Chair of Medicine in the Johns Hopkins University with the opening of the Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1889. Here were spent the sixteen golden, most productive years of his life, and here he made his two greatest contributions to medicine, the most important being the creation of the first medical clinic worthy of the name in any English-speaking country, and the other the publication in 1892 of his textbook presenting with rare literary skill and unexampled success the principles and practice of medicine adequately and completely for the first time in English after the great revolutionary changes brought about by modern bacteriology.

Osler was personally familiar not only with the system of teaching in the English hospitals but also with the organization and spirit of the German medical clinics. In an article published as early as 1884 immediately after a visit to the Berlin clinics he says: "The advanced position of German medicine and the reputation of the schools as teaching centres are largely fruits of this system." Osler left no doubt of the nature of his professional ambitions, which he summarized in an address at a farewell dinner given by the profession of the United States and Canada in 1905, as being first "to make of myself a good clinical physician," to rank with eminent physicians of the past whom he names, an ambition more than fulfilled, and second "to build up a great clinic on Teutonic lines, not on those previously followed here and in England, but on lines which have placed the scientific medicine of Germany in the forefront of the world. And if I have done anything to promote the growth of clinical medicine, it has been in this direction, in the formation of a large clinic with a well organized series of assistants and house physicians and with proper laboratories in which to work at the intricate problems that confront us in internal medicine. For the opportunities which I have had at Johns Hopkins Hospital to carry out these ideas I am truly thankful."

If the omission of these significant words from the biography, which extracts another part of the same address, be due to fear of antagonizing a certain body of public sentiment by the reference to Germany, this feeling might have been partly allayed by pointing out that Osler improved upon

the German model by engrafting upon it the English system of clinical clerkships—a feature indicated by Dr. Cushing in the beautiful dedication of the work, which embodies the sentiment of the epitaph desired by Osler for himself: "Here lies the man who admitted students to the wards."

Osler's clinic was pervaded by the true spirit of scientific inquiry and here were trained assistants and workers who became distinguished clinicians and investigators. His own contributions to medical knowledge were many and valuable, although his name is associated with no great scientific discovery. It is, however, attached to two diseases, to which the biographer suggests adding a third.

Osler was well aware of the need of improvement and further development of the clinic and writes to his successor: "Much remains in the way of organization for higher lines of work." Although he himself could not have carried longer than he did the double burden of conduct of the clinic and an ever increasing consulting practice, he was not in sympathy with the introduction later at the Johns Hopkins of the so-called 'full-time' system, intended to relieve the heads of the major clinics and some of their assistants from the necessity of engaging in private practice for a livelihood. Dr. Cushing has introduced in the second volume several passages expressive of Osler's opinions on this much discussed subject, which, by the way, should not be called, as is done by the author, "the Rockefeller programme," for it did not originate with any Rockefeller Board. Although Osler expressed himself generally in opposition,

"he hedged a good deal," as the author remarks, and was evidently perplexed, as appears from a sentence following an expression of disapproval of full-time teaching in an address in 1913: "At the same time let me frankly confess that I mistrust my own judgment, as this is a problem for young men and for the future." A correction should be made at the end of the footnote in Vol. II, p. 420, for Osler's final expression on this subject was not in the paper of 1915 there referred to, but in the open letter to the Dean of the Medical Faculty of McGill University, his own alma mater, written in August, 1919, only a few weeks before the onset of his last illness, from which a few phrases are quoted later in the volume, but with regrettable omission, in view of what had appeared in previous pages, of the essential part of the letter urging the appointment of "whole-time (or if thought wiser, largely so)" heads of clinics, and of assistants, "whole and part time."

In the 375 pages devoted to the Baltimore period is presented a vivid narrative of the life of the mature Osler, the great physician and teacher, in the full vigor and plenitude of his powers, with his professional and intellectual interests fully developed and given free scope. Here one can follow Osler's important share in the great reforms of hospital organization and medical education effected at the Johns Hopkins, his inspiring methods of clinical teaching, his intimate relations with staff and students, his inimitable ways with patients, his establishment and rejuvenation of medical societies, for which he had a ravenous appetite, his helpful participation in the life of the

community and of the local profession, his championship of the cause of public health, his stirring addresses, and many other activities—all told with a wealth of detail and of anecdote, which make the real Osler live again for the reader. His joy in the companionship of children was a striking trait. Perhaps the playful wit and humor and zest of the many practical jokes and pranks and mystifications somewhat evaporate when committed to paper, but the impression of a radiant and sympathetic personality, of a lovable, generous and delightful friend and companion and of an inspiring teacher is firmly fixed, and one can understand that his disciples are sealed of the tribe of Osler, the Chief.

With Osler's happy marriage in 1892 in his forty-third year began a more intimate personal and social life, which in his homes in Baltimore and later in Oxford—the 'Open Arms'—possesses, as narrated by the biographer, something of the interest and charm, although in a very different way, of Sir Thomas More's household, immortalized by Erasmus.

Throughout the story the author dwells with merited enthusiasm upon Osler's services in the anti-tuberculosis and other public health movements, and considers justifiably that his vigorous early participation in the world-wide campaign against tuberculosis stands "in the forefront of the many public services he rendered." One, however, pauses when in another connection the feeling is expressed "that Osler's greatest professional service was that of a propagandist of public health measures," and is frankly startled when

the Philistinic remark follows that this is "a rôle as important as that of the laboratory scientist whose cloistered studies supplied the knowledge on which our whole public health movement is based" —that is to say of a Pasteur or a Koch. There might possibly be acquiescence in the former statement in England where Osler had no real clinic nor opportunity for important clinical teaching, but after all he was a clinician, not a sanitarian, and as already indicated won his brightest laurels in the field which he cultivated so assiduously and successfully and where his professional ambitions lay. It is not necessary to shift these laurels in order to appreciate properly the aid which he rendered to the movements of public health, in which he was deeply interested. Less frequently the originator than the animator of these movements, he was always ready to respond to appeals to address public meetings and to participate effectively in other ways. No other voice was so powerful in arousing the interest and action of the public and the profession. He had the 'daemonic' faculty, the faculty which awakens intelligent enthusiasm in others.

Particularly well told are all the circumstances connected with Osler's call to the Regius Professorship of Medicine at Oxford and with his departure from Baltimore in 1905, including the commotion caused by the 'Fixed Period' valedictory address, cited some years later in an article entitled 'The Confessions of a Yellow Journalist,' as one of the two best known modern examples of persons victimized for the purpose of 'copy.' His leaving was a serious loss to the Johns Hopkins

Medical School to which he had brought great distinction and rendered services of inestimable value, but under the circumstances no other decision could be expected. The chair at Oxford, notwithstanding its prestige, offers no opportunities for clinical work and teaching comparable to those which he was leaving at the Johns Hopkins and would not have tempted him a few years earlier. He had already declined attractive offers from Edinburgh, Harvard and other universities. But he was quite sincere in his oft expressed intention to resign active clinical teaching at sixty years of age. Above all he was physically for the time being literally at the end of his rope. No mortal could carry further the double burden, ever heavier, which he had assumed of the clinic and outside practice—he was the doctors' doctor—without neglect of one or the other. His letters to his colleagues at the time are full of such expressions as: "I am on the down grade, the pace of the last three winters has been such that I knew I was riding for a fall." The call to Oxford offered an ideal opportunity to retire to a life of relative academic ease amid congenial and delightful surroundings, and ten years later he records in his account book that the experiment of this transplantation had been "most successful" —"extraordinarily happy years"—"the one thing I miss is the active teaching and the close association with students and a large group of young doctors, but I console myself with the thirty-one years of strenuous work I had in Canada and in the United States." As he often expressed it: "I have had my innings."

The interest of the story now shifts, but it never slackens, and as the end approaches the effect is cumulative. There remained fourteen years of anything but academic ease, years crowded with work, incidents and experiences, surpassing in interest to the general reader those which had preceded. Of the quick adjustment to life in Oxford and prompt recognition of Osler's qualities Herbert Fisher, then Fellow of New College, writes in words worth quoting in full:

"Though Oxford is proverbially hospitable and generous, she does not easily capitulate to strangers, especially if their claim to distinction rests upon scientific rather than on literary grounds, but Osler left Oxford no choice, and from the first the surrender of the university was absolute and immediate. Of course his great reputation as a physician and medical writer had preceded him, but we immediately discovered that finished competence in his own art and science was but a small part of the man, that the new Regius Professor was the least professional of doctors and the least academic of professors, that he was amazingly devoid of vanity and pedantic inhibitions, that his spirit was free, alert, vivacious, and that there was apparently no end to the span of his interests or to the vivid life-giving energy which he was prepared to throw into any task which fell to him to discharge."

Another, perhaps even more significant, note is struck by his brother Regius at Cambridge, Sir Clifford Allbutt, in the preface to the memorial volume in honor of Osler's seventieth birthday in 1919, where in referring to his coming to Oxford he addresses him:

"Thus, almost with the rapidity of thought, between Canada, the United States and Great Britain an academic link three-fold was forged. In no person as well as in

your own could this unity have been so happily consummated; you arrived indeed from overseas but as a pilgrim child of Oxford. In you the literary and historical tradition of the beautiful city was united with the zeal and adventure of the New World."

The American Rhodes scholars and the medical officers from overseas in the Great War can testify to the strength and service of this more than academic three-fold bond, which runs like a golden thread through the story of this last period of Osler's life.

Dr. Cushing with full information and complete mastery of detail presents a colorful and inspiring picture of Osler's multifarious activities during the British period—the delight in the Christ Church studentship, the signal services to the University as Curator of the Bodleian, delegate of the University Press, master of the picturesque almshouse at Ewelme, examiner and teacher, the work for the profession, with which he became completely identified, in founding societies and journals, in participating in meetings, in giving addresses and in many other ways, his services in promoting public health, in work on and for commissions, and a multitude of other things so varied as repeatedly to elicit from the recorder of all this the exclamation: "How did he find time to do it?" With the extension of his influence, the broadening of his culture, the enrichment of his social intimacies and relations, the ruling passion of his life—love for his profession—never waned, nor did the spell which he cast over students and young doctors. The stirring account of Osler's services in the war and of related incidents occu-

pies more space in the biography than any other part of his life of equal duration. Many now and hereafter will be grateful to Dr. Cushing for presenting so fully the touching story of the only son, Edward Revere Osler, fallen in action in August, 1917, whose memory is perpetuated most appropriately in the Tudor and Stuart Club founded by his parents at the Johns Hopkins University.

While Osler's clinical contributions became fewer and less important, being derived largely from his American material, his literary output remained considerable, although in his account book in 1915 he bewails that "it has been so much less than in the previous decade." Few physicians have ever felt a more imperative necessity to write and publish. As his biographer says: "Almost everything he did became grist to his literary mill." Much of his writing was journalistic—editorials, book reviews, obituaries, brief notes on men, books and questions of the day, travel and news letters, and the like—and it is surprising how well written and interesting are many of the fugitive pieces which make up the greater number of the 1195 titles in Miss Blogg's painstaking 'Bibliography of Sir William Osler.' Besides these there remain the many substantial contributions to medicine, and the occasional addresses, many of which are collected in the 'Aequanimitas' and 'Alabama Student' volumes, which have given so much delight not only to medical students and doctors but also to the general reader. Even if his counsels may seem at times commonplace, they are beautifully expressed, and the best is that 'the conduct of his own life was a mirror of his doctrine.'

While Osler could and usually did write the most simple, clear, direct, terse and forcible English, he indulged often when occasion and matter permitted, and sometimes without this permission, in recondite allusions, quotations, metaphors, analogies and conceits reminiscent of his familiarity with the Bible and of the style of his favorite authors—to whom he stuck as he did to his other friends—as Sir Thomas Browne, Robert Burton, Donne, Montaigne—a style which would be considered in another artificial and pedantic, but so assimilated by him as to become almost his own idiom and natural literary garment. 'The bridle of Theages,' 'the secret of Hermippus,' 'the curses of Bishop Ernulphus,' 'the ordnance of Nisroch,' 'the sparrow hawks of Montague College,' 'wrapped in Strabo's cloak,' 'Nehushtan written on its portals,' and scores of other more or less bewildering allusions, could be culled from Osler's writings to make a Bryn Mawr intelligence test. While he freely borrowed from others, and unlike many imitators and copyists did not destroy his models, he has found men willing to borrow from him as freely. His writings are full of quotable epigrams, aphorisms and felicitous sayings, which have become part of the intellectual currency of the present generation of doctors, and it is no difficult task to form a volume, as has been so well done by Dr. Camac in his 'Counsels and Ideals from the Writings of William Osler,' of readable excerpts from his addresses and other publications.

While Osler did not profess to be a man of letters, he had the literary temperament and there is a general savor of letters in many of his writ-

ings. He was received as one of their own in the inner circle of literary scholars and lovers of books. There is a literary as well as a scientific side to almost everything, and he did much during his spacious life to bridge the wide gulf between the literary and the scientific worlds. His scholarship was less that of an *érudit* than of Macaulay's scholar, who reads his Plato with his feet on the fender, albeit in Jowett's translation, for his classical foundation was only moderate. Not only could he transcribe the facts of knowledge in diction befitting a scientific composition, but he had also that rarer gift, an imaginative sense of fact, which, as Pater has shown, is the deepest secret of the literature of power. He was a transmitter, a transmuter and a vitalizer of knowledge more than a creator. Osler did not abandon medicine for the Muses, as did Goldsmith and Keats, nor cultivate them along with but apart from his profession, as did Arbuthnot, Akenside, for a time Smollett, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Weir Mitchell and many other physicians, but he invited the Muses, at least some of them, into the Temple of Aesculapius, the son of Apollo, and made them feel at home there.

With the passing years his love of books, his enamored pursuit of the art and mystery of book-collecting, his devotion to libraries, both his own and those of others—"every book," he used to say, "has its natural habitat"—and his studies in medical biography and bibliography, all interwoven from the beginning in the history of Osler's professional life, absorbed more and more of his time and eventually became his chief literary interest.

All of this is told with the sympathetic understanding of a fellow bibliophile in the person of his biographer. Osler's published papers and monographs in the field of medical biography and bibliography—'bio-bibliography' he called it following French usage—as those on Beaumont, Bartlett, Bassett, Dover, Linacre, Servetus, Fracastorius, Sir Thomas Browne, Burton, although less popular than his general addresses, are his most important contributions outside of clinical medicine. In a field where it is difficult for scholarship to escape the dryness of dust Osler was never dull and as Sudhoff, the most eminent living medical historian, as quoted by Garrison, remarks, "an essay of Osler's is worth many ponderous tomes of dry erudition." Cushing has rescued several unpublished fragments, including two delicious ones on Sydenham and Boerhaave. One wishes that Osler's brush had been tried on a larger canvas. The forthcoming publication of the annotated catalogue of his superb medical library, destined for McGill University, with its original classification under a 'bibliotheca prima,' 'secunda,' and so on, will enlarge Osler's fame as a medical bibliographer and historian, additional evidence of which is his presidency for the last six years of his life of the Bibliographical Society and membership in the Roxburghe Club.

Particularly interesting and suggestive are Osler's views concerning a library school and 'the School of the Book' and the uses of a library, such as the Bodleian, as a '*Studium Generale*,' not solely to foster an interest in the history of science

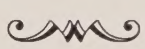
and of literature but also for the actual promotion of both subjects.

Osler was in the broadest sense a humanist. The following sentences from his important presidential address before the British Classical Association in May, 1919, must suffice to indicate his position. Speaking of the humanities, he says: "I like to think of the pleasant flavoured word as embracing all the knowledge of the ancient classical world —what man knew of nature as well as what he knew of himself"—and again: "Paraphrasing Mark Twain's comment upon Christian Science, the so-called humanists have not enough science, and science sadly lacks the humanities . . . . . Twin berries on one stem, grievous damage has been done to both in regarding the humanities and science in any other light than complemental."

His broad humanistic culture and wide knowledge of medical history and of books were not merely added graces and adornments, but they were an essential part of Osler's intellectual equipment as a teacher, physician and student of disease. He exemplified the historical method of approach both in teaching and in research. His influence in fostering interest in medical history by establishing the Medical Historical Club at Johns Hopkins Medical School and in other cultural ways was not the least of the many services he rendered to that institution.

Osler often applied to himself Gibbon's admission that 'he had drawn a high prize in the lottery of life,' and surely his career also 'represents a successful experiment in the great art of living.'

One cannot fail to be impressed with the almost perfect adaptation of his talents and temperament to the accidents and circumstances of his life, and not less with the dexterous ministration of these diverse external events to the orderly development and eventual fulfillment of purposes and ideals formed in youth and early manhood. Rarely has Alfred de Vigny's conception of a great life been more fully realized: "*Qu'est-ce qu'une grande vie? Une pensée de la jeunesse exécutée par l'âge mûr.*" Osler's characteristic good fortune has followed him beyond the grave by this complete and worthy record of his life.



Footnote:—There are remarkably few typographical errors. The following have been noted: Vol. I, p. 210 and correspondingly in Index—'Warthin's' should read 'Martin's'; I, 212—'Sperrat' should be 'Spessart' and 'Schliessen' should be 'Schlesien'; I, 313—second date on page should be '1885'; I, 380 and in Index—'John' should be 'James' Cardinal Gibbons; I, 569—'local' should be 'State' Board of Health; II, 266 and correspondingly in Index—'Theodore' should be 'Edward G.' Janeway; II, 519 and in Index—'Dutton' should be 'Dalton'; II, 596, 1. 19 from bottom—'at' should be 'as'; II, 713—reference '50' after Osler, Francis, should come after Osler, Featherston; II, 718—after Pater—change '683' to '684'.